

## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **SENATE COMMITTEE INVESTIGATES LOSS OF STATE SOVEREIGNTY UNDER INTERNATIONAL TRADE AGREEMENTS**

**SACRAMENTO** – The Senate Select Committee on International Trade Policy and State Legislation, chaired by Senator Sheila Kuehl, held a legislative briefing today on the potential loss of state sovereignty under trade agreements such as the WTO, NAFTA and the soon to be negotiated Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA).

The Select Committee was created to explore the appropriate relationship between states and the federal government when international trade policy intersects with traditional state roles in environmental protection, human rights, consumer safety and traditional objectives of democratic governance.

As the reach of these trade rules expands, state governments, particularly state legislatures, could be seriously compromised in their ability to legislate in these areas and could be required to alter their laws or face trade sanctions. This represents an interference with the state's ability to legislate with the public interest in mind and demonstrates a disruption of the balance of power between the federal government and the states.

“Strong legislative oversight is essential for balancing democracy and trade,” says Senator Sheila Kuehl, chair of the committee and a speaker at the briefing. “States have been shut out of the trade debates for too long. We must be vigilant that none of our state laws is undermined by trade agreements which get far less scrutiny than national legislation and no public input.”

Speakers at the briefing outlined some of the California laws at risk under trade agreements and outlined ways in which the states can contribute to the process.

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